

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 PC-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8715

INFO CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, RP

SUBJECT: MARCOS WITHDRAWS AFP FROM LANA O

1. ON OCTOBER 17 MALACANANG ANNOUNCED PRESIDENT MARCOS HAD DIRECTED CESSATION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN LANA O DEL SUR AND REPLACEMENT OF AFP UNITS IN AREA WITH CONSTABULARY FORCES, PREFERABLY COMPOSED OF MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS. PRESIDENT ACTED AS RESULT FALLOUT FROM OCTOBER 9 INCIDENT IN WHICH MAYOR OF PUALAS, HIS WIFE, GRANDCHILD, LOCAL SULTAN AND FIVE CITY POLICEMEN WERE SHOT BY TROOPS MANNING 29TH INFANTRY BATTALION CHECK POINT AT BACOLOD GRANDE. TROOPS REPORTEDLY MISTOOK VEHICLE IN WHICH MAYOR AND HIS PARTY TRAVELING FOR A STOLEN VEHICLE. IRONICALLY, THE MAYOR AND HIS PARTY WERE RETURNING FROM MARAWI CITY WHERE THEY HAD PARTICIPATED IN INAUGURATION OF LANA O CIVIC ACTION FORCE HEADQUARTERS AND MET WITH INTER ALIA PC COMMANDER MG FIDEL RAMOS.

2. COMMENT: MEANING OF PRESIDENT'S REPORTED DIRECTIVE IS VERY UNCLEAR. WHEN ARMY ATTACHE SOUGHT CLARIFICATION FROM CEMCON COMMANDING GENERAL ABAT AT LEYTE LANDING
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CEREMONY OCTOBER 20, ABAT DELIVERATELY CHANGED SUBJECT.

3. WE DOUBT THAT PRESIDENT REALLY INTENDING TO WITHDRAW AFP UNITS CURRENTLY STATIONED IN LANA O SINCE A) THERE ARE NO READY REPLACEMENTS IN TERMS OF NUMBERS; B) THERE ARE NO UNITS IN PC OR OTHER OUTFIT THAT HAVE IDEALIZE MIX OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH AFP UNITS NOW IN LANA O HAVE LARGELY BEEN IMMOBILIZED BY FEAR OF MOVING INTO CURRENTLY VERY UNSETTLED COUNTRYSIDE, SUCH DRASTIC CHANGE IN MILITARY UNITS COULD HAVE VERY DESTABILIZING EFFECT.

4. PRESIDENT'S DECLARATION MAY CONCEIVABLY HAVE HAD PURPOSE OF PLACATING MUSLIMS AFFRONTED BY KILLING OF MAYOR (OR AT LEAST THE MORE LITERATE MUSLIMS IN MANILA.) IT MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN INTENDED TO PORTRAY REGIME WHICH BROOKS NO EVIL IN LINE WITH CURRENT PURGE THEME, ALTHOUGH WHETHER REGIME WOULD ACTUALLY TAKE STEPS AGAINST MISCREANTS IS CLEARLY ANOTHER MATTER.
PURNELL

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